

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-08 INR-07 LAB-04
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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1669
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AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN
AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE
AMEMBASSY LISBON
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY OSLO
AMEMBASSY PARIS
USMISSION NATO

C O N F I D E N T I A L MADRID 6721

USEEC, OECD, AND EMBASSIES

E.O.11652: GDS
TAGS: ELAB, SP
SUBJECT: VIEWS OF MINISTER OF LABOR

1. LABOR MINISTER JIMENEZ DE PARGA, ACCOMPANIED BY
LABOR UNDER SECRETARY JERONIMO AROZAMENA (SEE ALSO MADRID
6720) AN HIS SPECIAL ASSISTANT ALBERTO ESCALERA, LUNCHE
SEPTEMBER 9 WITH THE MADRID-BASED LABOR ATTACHES (BRITISH,
FRENCH, WEST GERMAN, AND U.S.). DURING A TOUR D'HORIZON
OF POLITICO-LABOR MATTERS, THE MINISTER EXPRESSED THE
VIEWS HIGHLIGHTED BELOW.

2. GOVERNMENT-LABOR CONSULATATIONS. PERHAPS AS AN
UNCONSCIOUS CARRY OVER FROM THE AUTHORITARIAN TIMES OF THE
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FRANCO REGIME. THE TRADE UNIONS SEEMED TO THINK THAT IT
WAS UP TO THE GOVT BUREAUCRACY (I.E. THE LABOR MINISTRY)
TO TAKE THE INITIATIVE ON PRESENTING LABOR LEGISLATION
REFORMS. THE GOVT WAS TRYING TO GET IT ACROSS THAT
UNDER THE NEW DEMOCRATIC RULES OF THE GAME, SUCH LEGISLATION
SHOULD SPRING FROM THE CORTES (PARLIAMENT). THUS, THE GOVT
HOPED THAT THE OPPOSITION PARTIES- AS WELL AS THE UCD-MIGHT

COME UP WITH VALID LEGISLATION WHICH THE GOVT COULD SUPPORT THIS WAS THE MESSAGE THAT PRIME MINISTER SUAREZ WAS PASSING ON TO OPPOSITION PARTY LEADERS FONZALEZ (PSOE). FRAGA (AP) AND CARRILLO (PCE) DURING A CURRENT SERIES OF MEETINGS.

3. ASSISTANCE TO UGT. THE GERMAN LABATT STATED THAT HIS GOVT WAS CONCERNED THAT THE COMMUNIST-DOMINATED WORKERS' COMMISSIONS (SWC) NOT COME OUT AHEAD IN THE PRESENT BATTLE FOR POWER WITH THE SOCIALIST UGT. HE MADE SPECIFIC REFERENCE TO THE COMING PLANT COMMITTEE ELECTIONS (DEADLINE NOVEMBER 15). AND ASKED FOR THE MINISTER COMMENTS. JIMENEZ DE PARGA REPLIED THAT HE WAS AWARE THAT MANY WERE OF THE OPINION THAT THE GOVT SHOULD IN SOME WAY ASSIST THE UGT. HOWEVER HE CLAIMED, AND SUCH ASSISTANCE TO THE UGT JUST BEFORE THE PLANT ELECTIONS WOULD LEAVE THEM WIDE OPEN TO CHARGES OF FAVORITISM. (WE NOTE THAT THE SWC MADE THIS SAME POINT SEVERAL DAYS AGO-SEE MADRID 6567). THUS, CONTINUED THE MINISTER, THE GOVT WAS NOT DISPOSED TO PROCEED WITH ANY INITIAL PATRIMONY SETTLEMENT FOR THE UGT. HE ALSO NOTED IN AN ASIDE THAT THERE WERE ANY NUMBER OF CONFLICTING CLAIMS FROM VARIOUS UNIONS, AND IT WAS NOT ALL THAT CLEAR WHAT WAS IN FACT DUE THE UGT WITH RESPECT TO PROPERTIES CONFISCATED IN 1939 AFTER THE CIVIL WAT (WHICH IN ANY EVENT, HE SAID , ONLY REPRESENTED SOME 4 PERCENT OF THE TOTAL LABOR PATRIMONY).

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4. WHEN LABATT RAISED THE QUESTION OF THE STATUS OF THE GOVT GUARANTEE FOR THE DGB DM 10 MILLION LOAN TO THE UGT, THE MINISTER WAS EVASIVE AND AGAIN RAISED THE ISSUE OF "FAVORITISM". HE CONCLUDED HIS REMARKS ON THE SUBJECT BY NOTING THAT, IN ANY EVENT, THERE WAS LITTLE RISK THAT THE SWC COULD WIN OUT OVER THE UGT BECAUSE THE AVERAGE SPANISH WORKER WAS NOT COMMUNIST-INCLINED. FROM THE TONE OF THE MINISTER'S REMARKS AND HIS FREQUENT REFERENCES TO THE ROLE OF THE PSOE AS THE PRINCIPAL OPPOSITION PARTY, IT APPEARED EVIDENT THAT THE GOS WAS NOT DISPOSED TO AID THE PSOE-ALLIED UGT- AT LEAST AT THIS POINT IN TIME-FOR FEAR OF GIVING AID AND COMFORT TO THE RIVAL PSOE, WITH MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS NOT FAR OFF. HE DID NOT ACCPET THE THESIS THAT SUCH A POLICY IN FACT GAVE AID AND CONFORT TO THE SWC.

5. EMPLOYERS. HE PREFACED HIS RAMARKS ON THIS SUBJECT BY NOTING THAT THE OFTEN "IRRESPONSIBLE" SPANISH PRESS HAD MINISTERPRETED HIS STATEMENTS REGARDING SPANISH CAPITALISM (SEE MADRID 5681). HE FELT STRONGLY THAT SPANISH BUSINESSMEN MUST PROMPTLY GET IN STEP WITH THEIR WEST EUROPEAN AND AMERICAN COLLEAGUES WITH RESPECT TO BASIC BUSINESS ETHICS. IT WAS INEXCUSABLE, HE SAID, THAT "MOST SPANISH

BUSINESS" STILL KEEP DOUBLE OR EVEN TRIPLE ACCOUNTS.
WHEN ASKED BY THE BRITISH LABATT WHETHER THE EMPLOYERS
WOULD SOON BE JOINING THE GOVERNMENT LABOR CONSULATATION TO MAKE
THEM TRULY TRIPARTITE (THE EMPLOYERS HAVE UNTIL NOW BEEN
MEETING SEPARATELY WITH THE GOVT) HE NOTED THAT THIS
APPEARED IMPRACTICAL UNTIL SUCH TIME AS SOME OF LABOR'S
BASIC DEMANDS WERE STRAIGHTENED OUT (MADRID 6550.

6. IN CLOSING, THE LABOR MINISTER EXPRESSED HIS APPRECIATION
TO LABATTS FOR THE INTEREST EXPRESSED IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF
FREE TRADE UNIONISM IN SPAIN. A GOAL SHARED BY ALL AROUND THE
TABLE.EATON

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